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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Bulgaria

DATE DISTR. 26 January 1953

SUBJECT The Bukhovo Uranium Mines

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THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

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1. Deposits of uranium ore are reported from the Murgash Mountains, east of the village of Kremikovtzi, approximately 30 kilometers from Sofia. The mine is linked with Sofia by a national road and also by the ordinary railway line. The administration of the mines is located at Bukhovo village. The loading point is the Yana railway station on the Sofia-Makotsevo (Sub-Balkan) line. Exploration is continuing on the other slope of the Murgash Mountains near Botevgrad.
2. Five perimeters are being exploited and a total of 70 galleries have been driven. The galleries have either small horse-drawn carts or carts drawn by small electric motors. The mine has its own electrical energy center. The ore is taken to a loading platform where it is loaded automatically on wagons (sic) which have automatic unloading equipment and taken, under close surveillance, to the station at Yana.
3. At the Yana station, Soviet technicians examine the ore with a Geiger counter and classify it. First category material is loaded on freight cars at once and second and third categories are treated at the local installations. Each day approximately 600 tons of material leave Yana for the USSR. The undertaking is entirely Soviet, although a carefully chosen labor force from the Bulgarian Militia and the Bulgarian Army are also employed. Approximately 500 Soviet citizens (geologists, engineers, guards, and MVD agents) direct approximately 5,000 Bulgarian laborers at the mines and the transport operations.
4. The Bulgarian personnel consists entirely of individuals whose records have been carefully examined by the Communist Party. No political prisoners are used. The

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work is hard and bad for the health; tubercular maladies are numerous and there are rumors that after two or three years in the mines, the genital organs of the workers are affected. Mine workers have drawn two to three times the pay of ordinary miners. Chauffeurs and mechanics are also very well paid.

5. The workers live in a settlement built for the miners, or else in neighboring villages. Each worker has his own special job and is required to stick to it. Truck drivers are not allowed to visit the mines. Laborers engaged in loading ore are not allowed to know from which gallery the ore was extracted. Militia agents are everywhere. The mines are surrounded with barbed wire and with military guards. Signs reading "Entrance Forbidden. Will Fire Without Warning" are posted at all entries.
6. The work goes forward with great speed. When the geologists find a new vein of ore, a detachment of Trudovaks arrives that very night. A road is built at full speed; the miners arrive two days later (sic). Since the deposits are not very deeply buried, exploitation can begin at once.
7. Security measures against sabotage are ruthless. The moment the Militia agents and the Soviet engineers decide that a man is a saboteur, he is shot immediately. There is no trial.²

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1. [REDACTED] Comment: It is not clear whether "wagons" refers to trucks which have been used in the past to transport the ore from the mines to the Yana railroad station, or whether a spur line has now been completed as has been planned, according to previous reports, and that "wagons" refers to railroad cars.

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2. [REDACTED]

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